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Chair: Mr. Barros Melet (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr. Barros Melet (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (E/2016/34/Rev.1, E/2016/35 and E/2017/36)

Interactive dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies

1. **The President** said that the interactive dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies would be on the topic "Functions and capacities to improve the United Nations development system's collective support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

2. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review agreed in December 2016 had affirmed the call by Member States for a strong United Nations development system capable of delivering coherent and integrated support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Through its core functions, identified in the review, UNDG provided countries with integrated, evidence-based policy advice and analysis on the Goals, support for their mainstreaming into national plans and integrated normative support to establish, implement, monitor and report in the context of operational activities for development. Its other services included strengthening the capacities of national institutions and supporting national reporting on the Goals; maximizing the United Nations system's convening role by bringing together stakeholders from different constituencies; leveraging partnerships, knowledge and resources to achieve the Goals; and delivering support at the national and subnational levels in order to help reach the most vulnerable people.

3. In order for the United Nations development system to bring its collective capacities to bear in coherent, efficient and effective ways, development actors must first be well linked to the Organization's humanitarian, human rights and peacebuilding actors through a system-wide approach that responded effectively to country needs and maximized synergies across the pillars. Second, policy, programme and operational capacities could be better organized, with business models that incentivized collaboration instead of separation. Third, committed United Nations leadership, with requisite authority at the country level and an adequately resourced resident coordinator system, was critical. Fourth, UNDG must become better at ensuring that the expertise accumulated at the global and regional levels fed into the work done at the country level, and vice versa.

4. The United Nations development system had coalesced around improved standard operating procedures for delivering together and a coherent approach to implementing the Goals, namely, the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy. In line with that strategy, some 40 missions would be dispatched to countries in support of efforts to incorporate mainstreaming and acceleration of the Goals into national plans and budgets. UNDG was also supplying guidance to United Nations country teams in their efforts to support national achievement of the Goals.

5. At the global level, UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were providing technical assistance to almost 30 programme countries preparing to present their voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July.

6. The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda would require more sustainable and predictable financing and funding. To that end, UNDG was exploring a range of financing options and had reached an agreement on setting up a joint fund for the 2030 Agenda to enable country teams to provide the integrated policy support that countries were requesting.

7. Under the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the various entities within the United Nations development system were requested to step up and integrate collaboration within their respective strategic plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, UNDP was closely coordinating with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) as UNDP developed its new strategic plan. The four agencies were firming up proposals on, inter alia, including in each strategic plan a specific chapter outlining a

common approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda, in accordance with each agency's mandate; further harmonizing and streamlining the design of results frameworks and reporting; having a common position on how best to link results to resources; and promoting a coherent and complementary approach to women's empowerment and gender equality.

8. As the host and manager of the resident coordinator system, UNDP was committed to strengthening and enhancing the system's effectiveness, which was crucial to ensuring a well-coordinated United Nations in-country response. Doing so would require more financial support from Member States, as UNDP continued to pay the bulk of the resident coordinator system's costs, while some agencies paid only part of their share and the 19 Secretariat entities did not pay at all. Securing Member State support in every governing body and in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly for full compliance with financial responsibilities towards the system was therefore vital.

9. **Mr. Lake** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review had reminded Member States, civil society, donors and the business community within and beyond the United Nations that a collaborative effort would be required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and thereby turn the promises set out in the 2030 Agenda into tangible results. The United Nations must therefore focus more on delivery and people and less on process and bureaucracy.

10. UNICEF fully supported implementing the mandate of the policy review and reforms to improve the coordination and efficiency of the United Nations. To that end, UNICEF had conceived its forthcoming four-year strategic plan around results that would support the achievement of the Goals in five areas pertaining to children, namely, survival and flourishing, education, protection from violence and exploitation, safe and clean environment, and equal opportunities in life. An integrated "results and resources" framework would enable UNICEF to estimate the amount of funding needed to achieve particular results. The Fund was also working closely with sister agencies to coordinate strategic plans and link their resources and programming to the 2030 Agenda, making the most of comparative advantages while eliminating redundancies.

11. In line with the commitment in the policy review to collaboration, UNICEF would continue to deepen its work within United Nations country teams around the world. The standard operating procedures had shown that United Nations agencies could work more closely together, and with Governments and other partners, on similar processes to achieve results. Results groups, one third of which were convened by UNICEF, were increasingly bringing together agencies' respective expertise and programmatic strengths. In Guyana, for example, the Fund, alongside UNFPA and UN-Women, had advocated for that country's new Sexual Offences Act.

12. There was also an opportunity to broaden the results groups to include the Fund's many non-United Nations partners. The work done by those groups should be enhanced by redoubling efforts to plan, programme, monitor and report for results; a pilot initiative in which the United Nations system would conduct joint risk analysis, needs assessments and practical responses could constitute a step in that direction.

13. Collaboration could also save precious financial resources, as evidenced by the savings of nearly $3 million reported by UNICEF country offices as a result of sharing business costs with other agencies. Coordinating its fleet of vehicles with two other agencies could yield additional annual savings of up to $4 million for the Fund alone, while increasing the safety and security of its personnel. In the interest of increased operational efficiency, UNICEF had invested in a new global shared services centre in Budapest to process all its financial and administrative transactions. In addition, UNICEF was reforming its human resources practices to improve recruitment, talent management and performance evaluation, and a new field results group would enable it to align resources in the field.

14. As a result of those measures and the introduction of targeted procurement strategies into supply functions, UNICEF and its governmental and United Nations partners had saved approximately $1.5 billion over the previous five years. Ultimately, the Fund's manifold efforts had a single overarching objective, namely, to deliver results to the millions of children and their families left behind in the march of progress, thereby healing divisions and helping to achieve peace. Improving the lives of children was the best pathway to a more peaceful world. Peace itself was measured not only in diplomatic agreements but in people's ability, in the aftermath of a peace process, to access health care, nutrition, education and protection.

15. **Mr. Osotimehin** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), panellist, said that UNFPA was committed to supporting Member States in

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which guided the development of a new generation of strategic plans geared towards enhancing system-wide coherence. The multidimensional nature of poverty required a repositioning of the United Nations system in order to provide differentiated support for national implementation efforts. Within that system, UNFPA had pioneered a differentiated approach to programming in its business model, which accounted for a set of characteristics. Moving forward, the Fund would continue to modify the model, equipping it to reach those furthest behind, especially marginalized women and adolescent girls, and making it more demand-driven and better equipped to support countries in achieving the Goals within the framework of sovereignty.

16. Young people must be embraced as full partners in order to guarantee effective action across the development, humanitarian, human rights and peace nexus. Several recently adopted global agendas, resolutions and agreements had been informed by the logic of investing in and empowering youth; in particular, the 2030 Agenda had been shaped significantly by input from young people, specifically cited them as critical agents of change and made them a priority across all 17 Goals.

17. UNFPA was working with 28 African countries to help them build their development agenda around the demographic dividend and encourage them to invest more in young people. At the recent World Humanitarian Summit, UNFPA had convened the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other humanitarian partners. Moreover, the global study on youth, peace and security that UNFPA was drafting in conjunction with the Peacebuilding Support Office also capitalized on the contribution of young people to building resilience, sustainability and peaceful societies.

18. The trillions of dollars required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals could only be harnessed by a full commitment to liberate both domestic and international resources, seeking public and private financing from a wide range of sources. The necessary shift from existing development financing and strategic partnership practice would require the United Nations system to adapt corporate practices and capacities to attract the level of funding needed from a broad base of donors, commensurate with the resource requirements of agencies' respective strategic plans. Appropriate innovative and blended financing mobility must be tapped into, beyond traditional official development assistance (ODA) flows. Perhaps more importantly, the system needed to retool and assert itself as a partner supporting Member States in leveraging resources to finance the 2030 Agenda. In order to achieve sustainable development, traditional grant funding must be used in an effective manner that freed up additional resources within a coherent and integrated financing framework.

19. To that end, a clear and thorough understanding of financing flows would be required, as would partnerships with Governments, development banks, financial institutions, high-net-worth individuals and other actors to harness their respective skill sets and mandates for financing sustainable development. There must also be a shift in the organizational, cultural and business models to facilitate investment and informed risk-taking in emerging streams of development financing. Pooling resources and innovation between United Nations system entities and other partners was critical for continuing relevance and competitiveness.

20. Ensuring the availability of accurate data and enhancing data systems would be crucial to upholding the imperative to leave no one behind, given that vulnerable individuals must be identified as such. An improved understanding of subnational variations and inequalities in health, education, wealth and access to informational resources would be essential so that all people were able to assert their rights and participate in development. A true data revolution would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision-making, promote open access to and use of data, drive investments in people and ensure data privacy. Harnessing the potential of data for the public good would require new partnerships and commitments.

21. In 2016, UNFPA had made important progress towards engaging with strategic partners by putting in place a strategy which clearly outlined how new non-traditional partners could support the Sustainable Development Goals. The current strategic framework examined the global, regional and country-level situations and guided UNFPA efforts to tap into the potential offered by partnerships, in coordination with other United Nations agencies. Those initiatives would add value to the Fund's work of delivering integrated sexual reproductive health services for women and youth and creating tangible solutions to support the Goals.

22. As an organization with a broad country presence and extensive experience in multilateral affairs, UNFPA was well positioned to foster South-South and triangular cooperation in support of country efforts to

achieve the Goals and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Its actions to that end included identifying solution providers, fostering regional hubs and establishing academic online training.

23. The equity and poverty eradication that the Sustainable Development Goals envisaged must be based on quality data in order to ensure access to health and education throughout the life cycle, the development of the young and the achievement of a demographic dividend in countries where that was a possibility. UNFPA would continue to work with other United Nations agencies and all partners to facilitate the achievement of those aims.

24. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, said that WFP was committed to defeating famine and supporting peace and conflict prevention to ensure that populations had access to adequate nutritious food. The Programme was working to respond to the current famine in South Sudan and looming famine in Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, which threatened 20 million people. Conflict was a major factor in all of those crises. There were also significant continuing needs in Africa and the Middle East, where there were still large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require a massive, coordinated and integrated humanitarian and development effort.

25. In November 2016, WFP had adopted an integrated road map to build a better future for those who were furthest behind and to place humanitarian assistance within the context of broader development initiatives. The road map included a strategic plan for 2017-2021, a new policy on country strategic plans, a revised budget structure, a revamped financial framework and a new corporate results framework.

26. The new system devised would enhance the Programme's contribution to action related to the food security and nutrition priorities of Governments, promote the efficient allocation of resources and support effective and innovative partnerships at the national, regional and global levels. WFP would move away from a project-based approach to a system of multi-year comprehensive strategic plans that took into account the nexus between humanitarian assistance, development and peace. The current strategic plan focused on Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17, which covered hunger and partnerships, but would also contribute to the achievement of many of the other Goals, since they were universal, interlinked and indivisible.

27. No single agency, organization or Government could eradicate hunger alone. In accordance with its corporate partnership strategy for 2014-2017, the Programme systematically aligned and integrated its activities with the actions and investments of Governments, other United Nations agencies and private sector and civil society stakeholders, which together could generate the systemic changes required for sustainable development.

28. WFP had established a result-based management framework to track its progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It had achieved 79 per cent compliance with the priority indicators resulting from the 2012 review and remained committed to achieving full compliance. It was working with the other UNDG members to establish increased coherence and integrated programming approaches, cost-effective and collaborative models of field presence and joint strategies at headquarters in order to better support country teams.

29. One of the commitments made in the context of the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review that had yet to be fulfilled concerned women's empowerment and gender equality, since gender inequality was both a cause and an effect of poverty and hunger. To systematically tackle the problem, WFP had launched a gender transformation programme in 2016 and was accelerating its initiative to mainstream gender issues across all policies, programmes and operations at the country-office level. It had met or exceeded 14 of the 15 indicators associated with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and was working to meet the remaining indicator, on gender parity in staffing.

30. In the face of resource constraints and unprecedented levels of need, it was essential for the entities comprising the United Nations development system to build on their core strengths, streamline their business processes and exercise discipline in their use of resources. The Programme would continue to improve the efficiency and transparency of its work and strive to fulfil its commitments under the 2030 Agenda. Alongside its partners, WFP would pursue the ultimate goal of eradicating hunger and do its utmost to seize the once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a better future for all of humanity.

31. **Mr. Glemarec** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide

presentation, said that the combination of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the agency-specific strategic plans soon to be adopted and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) guidance recently adopted by UNDG provided an opportunity to ensure that the United Nations development system could support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a coordinated, coherent, efficient and effective manner. In line with General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which stressed that the United Nations development system must be able to enhance the coordination, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of operational activities for development, the funds and programmes had established an inter-agency working group to ensure a common understanding of the key priorities and a harmonized approach to the development of integrated results and resources frameworks, which would include common indicators on gender equality and women's empowerment.

32. The new UNDAF guidance, which aimed to facilitate the implementation of the policy review resolution, identified four core programming principles: leave no one behind; human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability. Thus, the results chain currently linked the resolution in question to UNDAF, which was in turn linked to coherent and coordinated agency-specific country programming. The results chain should eventually extend to the performance plan of every United Nations staff member. If that unprecedented level of linkage were achieved, diversity would become a major collaborative advantage enabling the United Nations system to meet the unique needs of each Member State.

33. The strong focus on gender in the aforementioned resolution, the forthcoming agency-specific strategic plans and the UNDAF guidance presented an unprecedented opportunity to focus on the issue of gender equality as both a fundamental right and a means of accelerating sustainable development. At the current rate of progress, the Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved by 2030: it would take 50 years to achieve political parity, universal upper secondary education would not be achieved until 2084 and women would not receive equal pay until 2220. However, the Millennium Development Goal process had demonstrated that trends could be broken. One of the best ways to do that was to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, current efforts to close the gender gap in access to finance, land, information and markets in a number of sub-Saharan countries could increase the productivity of the women farmers concerned by 25 per cent, which would contribute to the achievement of 11 Sustainable Development Goals.

34. The first United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women had been a resounding success: 60 per cent of reporting agencies now met or exceeded the 15 performance indicators, compared with 21 per cent in 2012. To promote further progress, UN-Women was developing a new Action Plan and updating the gender equality scorecard used by country teams. There was evidence that the efforts of UN-Women were having positive results: 90 per cent of the 27 UNDAFs launched in 2016 included a component on gender equality and women's empowerment, and 29 per cent of joint programmes included a focus on gender equality.

35. With regard to the call in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for better coordination between development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts, UN-Women was working with its partners to update the gender policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in order to reduce the likelihood of crises, increase the effectiveness of responses and accelerate socioeconomic recovery.

36. It was essential to ensure that the United Nations development system was funded appropriately. The amount spent on operational activities for development in 2015 was $26.7 billion, or approximately 0.5-1 per cent of the annual cost of implementing the 2030 Agenda, which was estimated to be between $2.5 trillion and $5 trillion. To best support Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations development system must move away from project-based funding mechanisms and instead invest its available resources in such a way as to influence larger public and private financial flows. That would require funding to be timely, flexible and predictable. General Assembly resolution 71/243 would be a powerful tool for achieving that aim, as in it Member States recognized that core resources were the bedrock of United Nations operational activities for development and that high-quality non-core resources must also be provided.

37. In any financial flow there were incentives for either competition or collaboration. For the resident coordinator system to be effective, collective funding mechanisms should represent 15-20 per cent of the available funding so that the resident coordinator could offer incentives for collective action. However, such a situation currently existed in only 16 per cent of

programme countries. Shared service centres were also a good way to improve efficiency, as they made it possible to leverage economies of scale in procurement processes. Rapid progress was being made on those issues, and collective action could result in the establishment of an entirely new system, based on transparency, efficiency and accountability, within a few years.

38. **Mr. Vines** (Deputy Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that ILO and its tripartite constituents — its member States, employers' organizations and workers' organizations — agreed that anchoring the 2030 Agenda in the international standards established by the United Nations system would be key to ensuring coherence and integrated approaches at the global and national levels. His organization intended to use its country programmes on decent work as a vehicle for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as the Sustainable Development Goals reflected the four key elements of the ILO Decent Work Agenda: employment creation, social protection, core labour rights and social dialogue. Those programmes had been agreed to and designed by Governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, which gave ILO an entry point for developing joint programmes with its constituents and United Nations entities.

39. The comparative advantages of ILO included its capacity to reach diverse stakeholders at the global, regional and country levels and its vast range of specialized expertise. The challenge lay in determining how to harness that potential and provide integrated policy advice. The new UNDAF guidance and the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy were good first steps in that direction at the country level. ILO was also leading or participating in a number of issue-based multi-stakeholder alliances and partnerships. Other assets that ILO brought to the United Nations development system were its universal normative and supervisory functions in the creation and supervision of international labour standards and its technical and capacity-building expertise in policy areas related to the world of work. The tripartite membership and governance structure of ILO would also be an asset in the pursuit of the revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development called for in the 2030 Agenda.

40. The 2016 ILO resolution on advancing social justice through decent work called for ILO action to effectively assist its member States in planning, implementing and reporting on progress towards the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in the areas of partnership and development cooperation strategies; the alignment of ILO country programming with United Nations planning frameworks; capacity-building for ILO tripartite constituents to engage in sustainable development policy-making processes; and the provision of assistance to national statistics offices for the production and analysis of labour-related statistics and the development of Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

41. ILO had taken steps to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in its programming, planning and budgeting processes, in line with the key requests in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for entities of the United Nations development system to mainstream the Goals in their strategic planning at all levels and to strengthen results-based management. The organization's strategic policy framework for 2018-2021 and its proposed 2018-2019 programme and budget explicitly referred to the ILO contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the proposed programme and budget identified the principal Sustainable Development Goal targets to which each of its 10 policy outcomes would contribute and the indicators that would be used to help member States measure and monitor their progress. Moreover, environmental sustainability had, for the first time, been included as a cross-cutting policy element.

42. Those actions would be supported by a major reform of ILO processes. While in general there should be more focus on delivery, there was still a need to fix broken processes. Over the last two years ILO had reallocated around 12 per cent of funds from back-office work to direct service delivery, and the organization would continue its work in that direction. As a specialized agency, ILO had to seek the guidance of its governing body on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243. The governing body would discuss the resolution and its implications at its session in March 2017.

43. ILO supported and funded the resident coordinator system, which played a critical role in collaboration and coordination among agencies. Resident coordinators should be able to leverage the expertise of resident and non-resident agencies to contribute to the shared results of the United Nations development system and empower the collective leadership of United Nations country teams. Resident coordinators must receive appropriate funding in order to fulfil their functions. ILO would continue to increase its participation in the implementation of standard operating procedures, taking into account its mandate and its assessment of the cost effectiveness of such procedures.

44. **Mr. Zambrano** (Observer for Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group expected the system-wide outline of present functions and existing capacities of all United Nations entities carrying out operational activities for development in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, requested in General Assembly resolution 71/243, to clearly demonstrate the contribution of each entity to the 2030 Agenda. Current gaps must be identified in order to ensure that the system could be made ready to support implementation by Member States. Such support should consist of building relevant expertise and making it available to Member States, at their request and in a manner that was in line with their national priorities and gave them national ownership.

45. Not all overlaps were bad; some might be necessary when undertaking joint efforts. In such cases, the outline of functions and capacities would provide a basis for the effective division of labour. In that connection, the resident coordinator system should be strengthened in order to enhance coherence and coordination within the United Nations development system.

46. It was important to avoid expanding the scope of the outline to issues beyond those envisaged in the resolution, which did not request that the outline should be carried out at all levels. In particular, country presence models should not be considered, as they varied between entities as a result of their particular mandates and business models and should remain flexible in order to best address country needs and priorities. Similarly, the outline should not cover funding matters. The process of developing the outline should be as objective, simple and clear as possible. It should set out the comparative advantages and mandates of entities while refraining from listing their functions and capacities in a rigid manner that could jeopardize the required programming flexibility at the country level.

47. The strategic plans of development system entities should be drawn up in a transparent and inclusive manner and disseminated in a timely fashion. The plans should be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and cover the full range of policy orientations established through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process, including poverty eradication, capacity-building, South-South cooperation and national ownership. Furthermore, they must not contain assumptions concerning the outcome of the consideration by Member States of the upcoming reports of the Secretary-General.

48. **Ms. Pellegrom** (Observer for the Netherlands) said that it was important to reduce fragmentation within the United Nations development system by ensuring that the resident coordinator system was strong and properly financed, implementing the "Delivering as one" approach and establishing a common vision and approach to development. Her delegation welcomed the coordinated and consultative approach that had been taken by the relevant funds and programmes in the development of their strategic plans and hoped that such a model would be used in their dealings with Member States.

49. The United Nations development system should continue to operationalize linkages between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, which could be translated into effective synergies and real results on the ground. The progress that had been made with regard to partnerships had great potential to contribute to the implementation of the inclusive 2030 Agenda and the United Nations development system should maximize that potential by adopting an inclusive country-level approach involving all stakeholders. The process should include developing the capacities of staff to help countries seek out effective partnerships.

50. **Mr. Egli** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the panellists had failed to mention the gaps and overlaps within the system that had led to the General Assembly's calls in resolution 71/243 for a new operational model. He asked what areas had been identified as requiring increased collaboration and how the remaining recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, such as the implementation of standard operating procedures, would be addressed.

51. **Ms. Zahir** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that small States rarely had the opportunity to sit on the boards of United Nations entities. There should be a place at the table for everyone and more effective coordination was needed. For small island developing States and other vulnerable groups, it was important for agencies to take into account their specific challenges when formulating strategic plans. There should be no one-size-fits-all approach. The operation on the ground was important, as was a well-coordinated United Nations team. "Delivering as one" did not prevent the United Nations from delivering more effectively. There was therefore a need for closer work with resident coordinators. The resident coordinator system should be revisited in order to ensure a better fit with the priorities of programme countries. Funds should be pooled more frequently and

technological advances should be used as cost-saving mechanisms.

52. **Ms. Moleko** (South Africa) asked how to ensure that non-resident agencies worked collaboratively with United Nations country teams in order to enhance the effectiveness of the resident coordinator system. The current model, which presented a challenge both to UNDG and to Member States, clearly did not work.

53. **Mr. Shearman** (United Kingdom) said that the commitment to reorientation and transformation to support the Sustainable Development Goals was welcome. It was a crucial moment for the United Nations humanitarian system. Transparency, partnerships, country-level delivery and better targeting of resources were also important. The United Nations system could not do everything everywhere, meaning that a more diversified approach was needed, with greater coordination within the United Nations system. Accordingly, comprehensive disaggregated data were needed across the system for the United Nations to monitor progress and determine where resources should be targeted. It would be helpful to know how the system could be changed to play a more useful supporting role and how the situation would look different on the ground as a result.

54. **Ms. Fladby** (Norway) said that a coordinated approach was needed, including a research framework; otherwise it would be difficult to report systematically on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The ongoing pilot of cost-saving efforts could make a huge difference if it was scaled up. It would be interesting to hear from the executive heads on the subject of their major challenges, how they could be handled and what impact negative situations could have. The resident coordinator's office was not usually sufficiently resourced to carry out strategic planning and implement priorities.

55. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the functions and capacities review would help to analyse current thinking and identify real or apparent overlaps. Some entities had normative capacities while others had implementation capacities. One example was UNDP, which had no normative function in the area of human rights but was supporting and advising agencies and country teams under the universal periodic review. What might look like an overlap could well be a functional division.

56. It was important to identify where the implementation capacities and synergies were. Serious overlaps would need to be addressed but the functions and capacities review should lead to a more coherent system. UNDG would support that process and provide information and analysis when required. The aim should be to share analyses, plan jointly and focus on the way forward, which involved, inter alia, maximizing good system-wide processes, such as the standard operating procedures; adopting a joined-up approach to the Sustainable Development Goals; implementing the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy and business operation strategies; promoting the new country-level UNDAFs aimed at a few high-impact outcome areas; and using joint financing mechanisms, where appropriate, to supplement individual agency fundraising.

57. At the country level, greater use could be made of the resident coordinator as the representative of smaller entities, with agencies focusing on technical capacity and advice. Transaction-heavy and scattered projects in country teams needed to be wrapped up and replaced by integrated service centres, common business practices and common services.

58. There was no particular issue to be addressed with respect to non-resident agencies, since they participated in UNDAFs. Such agencies were welcome to rely on the resident coordinator as their representative in that process.

59. While a lot of data had been requested on capacity-building, much of it was rather sectoral. In that context, individual agencies had a large amount of capacity. However, given the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, perhaps more could be done to bring together relevant data sets.

60. The major challenges faced by executive heads often related to volatility, unpredictability and emergencies. There was therefore a need to build resilience, flexibility and nimbleness. Representatives should be replaced where necessary and proactive capacity-building was needed fast. Core funding was not what it had once been but systems needed to adapt so as to remain strong.

61. **Mr. Lake** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the United Nations itself and its values had never been viewed with more scepticism than at present. The Organization therefore needed to improve its processes and results. Processes should be judged by their results and not seen as ends in themselves. The mapping exercise for the examination of process efficiency by the Secretary-General should be conducted as soon as possible and should focus on comparative advantages and redundancies.

62. At the country level, there was a need for flexibility and to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Results should first be analysed; then processes should be built around them. There had already been progress with the standard operating procedures. Joint risk analyses, needs assessments and practical responses were also needed, possibly through initial pilot programmes.

63. Money had already been saved through joint back-office functions and collaborations in the area of business processes, which were justified provided that they actually saved money and increased efficiency. Joint financing mechanisms also needed to be pursued; similarly, they were not ends in themselves but rather a useful way to increase resources that could be used to underwrite joint actions.

64. Disaggregated data were needed in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to ensure equity and the principle of leaving no one behind. The Millennium Development Goals had been adversely affected by the tyranny of averages. Disaggregated data would make it possible to ensure equity within and among nations. The focus should be on the results of reforms rather than on the reforms themselves. Transformative changes were possible in the months ahead.

65. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the strategic priorities for 2017 would include looking for specific outputs, which included delivering coherent advocacy and communication messages system-wide, with a particular focus on gender equality and empowerment. Another priority was to advance sustainable development by strengthening linkages with human rights, humanitarian action and sustaining peace. A third area was to better leverage United Nations development system resources to achieve greater impact through leadership, strategic financing and business innovations.

66. **Mr. Osotimehin** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that different organizations had different data and they needed to be brought together. For example, countries needed help to conduct censuses, possibly in conjunction with mobile telephone companies and search engines in order to obtain real-time information to support planning. The United Nations could be the convenor for that process by assisting country programmes to set up robust data programmes.

67. Lessons were still being learned from the Millennium Development Goals. With the Sustainable Development Goals, countries needed institutions and systems to build capacity. Data served no function unless disaggregated by age, geography, gender, affected population sectors and other factors. Furthermore, data conferred on each individual the legal status of belonging to a country. If people were not in a database it was impossible to make plans for their education and health care. Migrants and refugees often lost out because nobody knew they existed.

68. One challenge was to convey the fact that development could not take place without human rights. The Sustainable Development Goals recognized that everyone had rights and that human rights were indivisible. It was not acceptable to separate economic and social rights. The question was how to overcome the challenges that were obstructing the human rights agenda.

69. Another challenge was to recognize that core resources enabled institutions to be nimble and innovative, and that predictable funding was needed for proper planning. However, UNFPA and other entities currently had more non-core resources than core resources. Donors and Member States should therefore devote more money to core resources without diminishing accountability.

70. **Ms. Oliveira Sobota** (Brazil) said that the outline of the functions of the entities of the United Nations development system should be simple and true to its purpose, which was to define their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. Overlaps and gaps in the different entities' work were not necessarily problematic; for instance, gaps might be explained by the fact that certain work was the responsibility of Member States and did not fall under a United Nations system mandate. Since Member States could not realistically be expected to analyse the different strategic plans of each entity, the provision of a clear outline by the United Nations system was necessary to make their calculations viable. Functions should be established with reference to General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The United Nations development system should also use the upcoming multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, and specifically the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, to leverage science and technology in support of the Goals.

71. The outline should not be a straightjacket that would guide United Nations development system activities at the country level rigidly. Instead it should allow for flexibility, reflecting the fact that the line between normative and operational work was often indistinct, as agencies' normative work frequently

expanded into policy support work. Harmonization of approaches should also take into account the different business models that fitted the mandates of United Nations agencies. In addition, country ownership was key; the United Nations development system should not impose its programme on countries but rather take a supporting role, providing expertise on request. The opposition between normative and operational work was somewhat abstract: normative aspects were necessarily taken into consideration in operational work. As such, there should not be a heavy emphasis on the distinction; it should be used simply to help agencies define the kind of support they could offer to Member States in order to increase the effectiveness of collaboration.

72. **Ms. Clifford** (Australia) said that it was important to consider the future of the Council's operational activities segment, and specifically its future work on transparency, the linkage between results and financing, and the resident coordinator system. She asked what role UNDG and transparency should play in relation to United Nations country teams in order to better comprehend what was happening across the system. She wondered how meetings such as the current one could be used to increase Member States' accountability and build on work being done in the field. In view of the role of the United Nations to promote sustainability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, she also wished to know how its funds and programmes, with the support of partnerships, were planning on scaling up relevant actions and leveraging partnerships.

73. **Mr. Denys** (Belgium) requested the executive heads of the funds and programmes to elaborate on what further actions were needed at headquarters level to allow the system to better deliver as one in the field, a topic which had been given short shrift in the discussion.

74. **Mr. Won** Doyeon (Republic of Korea) said that coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities was indeed important, but the United Nations development system should also intensify its collaboration with external stakeholders. In view of the recognition in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the importance of partnerships, and in particular the recommendation that United Nations entities should share such experiences, he wondered what efforts were being made to capture partnerships in strategic plans and specifically whether there were ongoing efforts to share best practices and knowledge.

75. **Mr. Palma Cerna** (Honduras) highlighted the importance of the differentiated approach of UNFPA and said that, through the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Member States had requested the United Nations development system to establish new mechanisms for measuring development that went beyond the criterion of income. The current process of elaborating strategic plans for funds and programmes, which should be coherent and harmonized, was an opportunity to respond to that mandate. New systems for measuring poverty and development were of particular interest to middle-income countries like Honduras, which continued to face challenges — largely as a consequence of climate change — that exceeded their capacity.

76. He asked whether the harmonization of approaches, terminology and structure applied to specialized agencies as well as funds and programmes, and how UNDG was helping specialized agencies to align their programmes with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

77. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that development work needed to be tailored to individual countries and that the guidance for country-level work must therefore not be too prescriptive.

78. With regard to the provision of country-level information and accountability for country work, as of mid-2017, a new, publicly accessible United Nations information portal would provide individualized information on the work of every United Nations country team, including what work was being done, how much was being spent, which agencies were active in each country and what results had been achieved. With regard to scale and leveraging, ODA should support countries to leverage other funding. It could play a significant role in a range of ways and should be viewed as a catalyst. Agency-funded programmes could be used to demonstrate ways of leveraging funding to Governments; for instance, ODA could be used to develop policy frameworks for renewable energy, which would spur further investment.

79. UNDG had consistently identified actions to be taken at headquarters level for full implementation of the standard operating procedures and had actively monitored the relevant action plan. Necessary actions included building the capacity to have common audits and evaluations; all United Nations entities joining the International Aid Transparency Initiative; the High-level Committee on Management examining the specialized agencies' human resource standards to enable more system-wide mobility; and ensuring that

agencies actually implemented each other's best business practices and country teams fully implemented their business operations strategies.

80. With regard to a common approach to strategic plans, the core funds and programmes were developing a common chapter, which would contain the main principles underpinning collaboration and support to countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a commitment to some key transformative actions. Areas for alignment across strategic plans could include shared approaches to developing results frameworks and to the linkages made between results and resources, and a common focus on gender equality; the plans should reflect areas where joint programming was possible and incorporate substantive common indicators.

81. Although not bound by decisions of the General Assembly, the specialized agencies tended to join UNDG consensuses regarding the harmonization of approaches.

82. **Mr. Glemarec** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review did not provide sufficiently detailed guidance on the comprehensive alignment of funds and programmes' strategic plans, UNDAFs and agency-specific country programmes. Therefore the creation of a coherent, strategic aligned plan, and its subsequent translation into the contexts of 150 separate UNDAFs, were principal challenges for the years ahead. However, the new UNDAF guidance provided the material necessary to make that plan possible.

83. The new UNDAF guidance ensured that the United Nations system would be working as one from the outset because the initial analysis part of the programming cycle incorporated humanitarian, peace and security and development efforts; in addition, there was a substantive common country assessment of work across all pillars. The new guidance responded to the mandate given by the Joint Inspection Unit, which had requested the United Nations system to follow a clear theory of change, linking the activities it supported to specific outcomes and prioritizing national development goals. The theory of change approach was also an excellent collaborative tool: it provided for a comprehensive outlook, meaning that those best placed to address issues could be identified and duplication of effort avoided. The theory of change would not only be a powerful means of enabling the United Nations system entities to work together, but would also offer a framework for the participation of all those with a role to play in achieving the 2030 Agenda — including Governments, the private sector and civil society. Successful strategic alignment would allow the United Nations system to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

84. Core resources, which enabled strict alignment of financing with approved strategies, were dwindling rapidly: in 2000 they had accounted for 47 per cent of total resources but currently comprised only 29 per cent. To meet the challenge of aligning finance to strategy, a critical mass of core resources and high quality non-core resources was required. Transparency was essential to the alignment process; the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, which was setting up a global pooled funding mechanism and made all information available online in real time, was exemplary in that regard. The United Nations entities were also taking the structural dialogue on financing very seriously.

85. Regarding the distinction between normative work and operational work, at least two United Nations definitions of the former existed: one limited normative work to intergovernmental processes, whilst the other included policy development and country-level implementation. It was indeed difficult to neatly separate the two types of work, which were innately connected, and every specialized agency had stakes in both. However, the UN-Women midterm review had concluded that being able to integrate such composite mandates was an asset.

86. **Mr. Vines** (Deputy Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the issue of normative versus policy processes was a critical one for ILO, which sought to draw the two areas of work together. ILO had recently written, jointly with UNDP, to all resident coordinators to provide them with tools and guidance on the application of the norms contained in its Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). Concentrating on connectivity between standards and policy was of more value than trying to overly differentiate between them.

87. ILO considered it important to have a wide range of partners, but also to pursue partnerships with diverse purposes. Knowledge-based partnerships, with academia for instance, were crucial in informing the policy work of ILO and of the United Nations system as a whole. With regard to funding partnerships, ILO was actively trying to work with the private sector, but increasingly private companies were themselves seeking to work with ILO, especially in the areas of supply chains and the garment industry.

88. Although it was true that the specialized agencies were not bound to align their planning with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, they did so in practice and had strongly endorsed the review through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and their own governing bodies. For its part, ILO had fully aligned its strategic planning cycle with the review cycle.

89. **Mr. Forsyth** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that partnerships came into their own at the global and country levels. Country plans were critical in focusing the energy of partnerships, which, to be successful, required clarity regarding expected outcomes. The most successful partnerships globally, such as Scaling Up Nutrition, had clear and practical objectives that clearly defined each actor's role.

90. The goal of leaving no one behind could not be achieved through any single Sustainable Development Goal. However, because most of the challenges had an equity dimension, practical cooperation on a range of issues, underpinned by a focus on equity, might be the key to collaborating more strategically at the national and global levels.

91. **Mr. Osotimehin** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that UNFPA had been following a differentiated, income-based business model for its country work. Its work in high- and middle-income countries focused on advocacy and policy advice, while in low-income countries UNFPA work tended to be comprehensive, including basic aspects such as programming and capacity-building. Based on feedback from countries, however, it was becoming apparent that classification of countries exclusively on the basis of income was not the best approach for leaving no one behind. In the development of its new strategic plan UNFPA was therefore considering alternative approaches. It was open to suggestions regarding approaches that would ensure that its work was inclusive, driven by equity and had a human face.

92. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that it was important not to think only in terms of headquarters and country teams: the regional development teams and groups also played a significant role, which should be further strengthened, in translating headquarters-level mandates down to the country teams.

93. One of the primary challenges to seamless implementation, actions and planning was that funding and financing were often driven into silos. It was necessary to secure funding that was readily accessible in order for it to be used effectively.

94. **Mr. Lindores** (Former Senior Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency and former Chair of the UNDP Executive Board), moderator, said that the progress made by the United Nations development system over the last 20 to 30 years in enhancing coherence and coordination had been extraordinary. However, the view had been expressed that the system was fundamentally unable to cope with the challenge of the 2030 Agenda and that bold moves were needed to adapt it to the future. Member States should therefore reflect on whether continuing along the current path of systematic — and significant — progress would take them where they wanted to go in relation to the 2030 Agenda. If not, they would have to consider alternative approaches.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.